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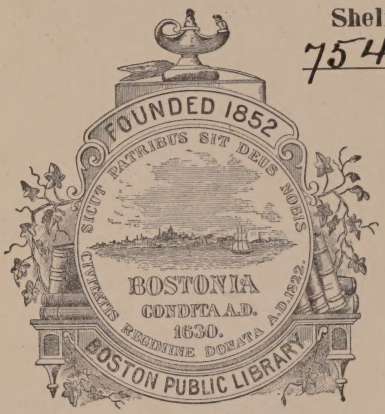

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ADDRESS TO THE PEOPLE,

BY REV. GEORGE RIPLEY.

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A DEVOTED MINISTRY.

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A

SERMON

DELIVERED AT THE ORDINATION OF

REV. JAMES I. T. COOLIDGE,

Bd.

AS PASTOR OF THE

PURCHASE STREET CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH,

IN BOSTON.

FEBRUARY 9, 1842.

By EZRA S. GANNETT.

BOSTON:
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SERMON.

COLOSSIANS iv. 17.

Say to Archippus, Take heed to the ministry which thou hast received in the Lord, that thou fulfil it.

IN selecting these words as the theme of discourse, I do not mean to anticipate the service which will fall to him who shall lay upon our brother the Charge of the churches to be faithful to his ministry. Leaving their personal application in the hands to which it has been assigned, I wish only to use them as suggestive of a train of thought which seems to me suitable to the occasion and the times. I may however be permitted to say, on the ground of a longer acquaintance than perhaps has been enjoyed by any one else who will take part in these services, that I believe he whose introduction into the ministry has brought us together this evening will devote himself to the work before him in the spirit of the Apostle's counsel. It is not for him more than for others — it is for the people as well as for the ministers — that this counsel may open

important topics of remark. A Devoted Ministry, is the subject which it presents to our notice. The propriety and importance of such a ministry, and the demand made for it by the circumstances around us, are the points which I hope to illustrate.

A devoted ministry;—it cannot be necessary that I should spend any time in explaining these words. A ministry devoted to the objects which it pursues; which, to use an Apostolic phrase, "gives itself wholly" to them, which suffers nothing to estrange or divert its regards, which exists for these objects, and for them alone. He is a *devoted* minister, whose one supreme and constant purpose it is, to "fulfil the ministry" that he has "received in the Lord;" who labors with a single view to the spiritual good of his people; who permits no other interest or engagement to interfere with his prosecution of the work which he has chosen; who gives to it his heart, his strength, his time, and whatever be his station or ability, consecrates all his powers to the ends for which the ministry was instituted. Such an one is an example of devotedness; and where all they who hold the ministerial office in a denomination or in the land exhibit such a character of single-hearted and unwearied faithfulness, there may be seen a devoted ministry blessing the churches and the land.

An argument in favor of such a ministry may be drawn from other employments of life. How do men act who are intent upon the prosecution of any secular work? They give themselves to it. They live for it,

and in it. They make it their business, the subject of their thoughts, the spring and end of their activity. Look at the merchant, who spends his days in the pursuit of wealth. The morning calls him to operations in which judgment and industry are combined for the accomplishment of the end which he meditates, and the evening finds him reviewing or remodelling his plans. Months roll on, years pass away, and still is he the same diligent, indefatigable man, ever increasing his resources only to enlarge his business. Look at the scholar, who exhausts the energies of his frame in his silent studies, exchanging the wealth of his heart for the riches with which he may store his mind, and preferring the ideal companions whom he finds in books to the society of living friends. Look at the politician, who sacrifices the relaxation of leisure, the delights of home, the pleasures of mental culture, and perhaps integrity of character, to his interest in public affairs. There is a devoted man — a model of practical intensity. I need not remind you of the artist, whom the familiar phrase aptly describes when it speaks of "his whole soul being in his profession." Turn but a glance upon the more mechanical labors of humanity. Behold the artisan, the operative in a cotton-mill, the day-laborer in our fields or our streets; still the same lesson is set before our eyes, the lesson of earnest and unremitted attention. The world is full of labor, and of labor which the heart sustains. On every side is there devotion to whatever has been chosen as the business of life. And now shall the ministry present an exception to this almost universal habit of civ-

ilized man? Of civilized man, do I say? Ay, and of the savage too; for he, when he adopts an end, spares no exertion till it is accomplished. On every side the example of devotedness reminds the minister of his duty, and shall he exhibit only the contrast of clerical repose? God forbid! Conscience, self-respect, and regard to the just opinion of mankind forbid it. Let him too show that his heart is in his work. Let it be said of him, as of the thousands and tens of thousands about him, — there is a man who is in earnest.

It may be said indeed, that the minister's occupations are so different in their nature from the engagements which engross other men, that their example cannot be used to denote his duty. They *are* different, but the difference is such as renders it tenfold more incumbent on him to consecrate all his energies to the service in which he is engaged. What *is* his business? What is the end of his labors? What is the aim and purpose of the ministry? Let us linger a moment on these inquiries.

The ministry was instituted, when Christ sent forth his Apostles "into all the world," to "preach the gospel to every creature," — to Jew and Gentile, Greek and Barbarian, bond and free. Its purpose has remained the same from that hour to this; to preach the gospel — the glad tidings, "the gospel of the kingdom" — the tidings whose burthen is the reign of God in human souls. To extend this reign, to lay its foundations in conviction and affection, and to build it up in the strength and beauty of progressive excellence is the

work which the ministry undertakes. Now say, ye whom I address; say, all to whom the question can be proposed; is not this a work which deserves and requires the utmost force and steadfastness of purpose? Consider the magnitude and value of the result contemplated. To make men willing subjects of the Divine government; to awaken in their hearts a filial piety; to redeem them from the bondage of sin, that they may enjoy "the liberty of the children of God;" to unfold to them the character of the Heavenly Father, that they may be won to reverence and love; to spread before them the riches of His grace and the conditions of His mercy, that they may be humbled in grateful supplication; to expose the baseness and hideousness of sin, that they may shrink from its embrace as from the arms of pollution and ruin; to portray the loveliness of religion, that they may desire its companionship; to persuade them, in a word, to choose before and above all things, as the one thing and the only thing that should be sought without delay and at whatever cost, "the righteousness which is of faith;" to enkindle this persuasion in men surrounded by the world, subject to passion, entangled by the flesh, enslaved to evil habit, this is the business of the ministry. Is it not enough to task one's powers and energies to the utmost? To save a soul from death—nay, to raise a soul from the grave of sin — is not this an undertaking to which a man needs to *devote* himself, his whole self? Not one soul alone is to be raised by the power which he shall exert as the minister of God, but many;

for the world is a vast grave-yard of buried souls. And long have they been under the dominion of moral death. "Lord," said the sister of Lazarus, "he has been dead four days;" as if even the word of Jesus could not restore life where corruption had impressed its footprints. Yet here are men who have been dead these long years, and corruption has preyed upon their spiritual natures. When the disciple of the Lord Jesus comes to them, and in his name calls them forth to the light and life of heaven, must he not pour his whole soul into that command, before it can pierce the tomb of sense and wake the dead?

Observe also the variety of considerations from which a faithful minister will draw now these, now those arguments, by which to persuade men to forsake their sins and live to the glory of God. From heaven above, from hell beneath, from the world around will he collect the inducements which he will press upon the reason, the conscience, and the heart of them whom he seeks to bring to life eternal. Having himself gone to the throne of the Infinite Majesty, and communed with its glories in fervent prayer, he will so describe them that men may see how poor are what they call splendor and greatness on earth. Having wept in pity over the anguish of a remorseful bosom, and the yet more dreadful miseries of impenitence, he will depict them in colors to arrest the careless and startle the reckless. Having marked how religion may sweetly associate itself with the usual industry of life, how it may add new charms to the happiness of home and

give fresh interest to the intercourse of society, he will labor to convince others that, while they should be religious, even if they must in consequence "forsake houses, and brethren, and father and mother, and wife and children, and lands," yet that they may be religious and retain all these possessions and get far more enjoyment than they have ever yet known from the relations which they sustain in life. To him nature will be an open book, as it was to his Master, from which he will borrow a thousand similitudes to illustrate Divine goodness and human duty. Providence will be a volume, on every page and in every line of which he will discover instruction that may be applied to those whom he seeks to redeem and benefit. The Bible will be his study and his theme, for there he reads the revelations of the Divine will, delivered by inspired messengers and authenticated by "many infallible proofs." While amidst all his thoughts and labors the image of Jesus will be prominent, the centre of his regards and the object on which he will endeavor to fasten the regards of his fellow men. *His* character will it be the constant aim of the Christian minister to reproduce in fainter, but in faithful lines upon the living canvass on which he spreads the colors of his own mind and heart. The cross on which the Divine Sufferer hung — a world's ransom, and the pledge of an infinite mercy — he will hold up before the admiring or the weeping gaze of them for whom that Sufferer died, and as his own soul is melted by the spectacle, he will implore them by the agonies and the mercies of Cal-

vary to "be reconciled to God." But that he may use all this various instruction and persuasion, must he not be entirely occupied with his office? Must he not think much, and observe much, and study much, and labor much; and if he be faithful to his office, where will he find time or inclination for any thing but its sacred duties?

The necessity of such devotedness may be made to appear, again, from the nature of the functions which the minister assumes when he enters upon his great work. If time would permit, I might speak of each of these functions in its relation to the purpose which we have ascribed to the ministry. It might be shown, that in visiting from house to house, bearing the messages and explaining the terms of salvation; in conversing with the sick upon the grounds of an immortal hope and the need of unfeigned repentance; in guiding the afflicted to the sources of consolation, while they are taught the uses of the discipline which they endure; in leading the young to desire the influences of religious truth and the joys of Christian experience; in meeting the objections of honest skepticism, and in chastising with judicious rebuke the levity of the scoffer; in all these exercises — to which the minister is called, not at wide intervals, but daily and continually — it might be shown, that he needs a skill, a prudence, an amount of intellectual resources, an acquaintance with Divine things, and above all, a soul filled with the spirit of his profession, that can be found only in one who not only loves his profession as

his life, but whose life is in his profession. But I will confine myself to a single function — that of preaching.

It falls to the minister to *preach*. The pulpit is his. There he is in his place. This place he cannot fill properly and worthily, unless his heart be in the services which he there performs. For, what is the object of preaching? Why has this pulpit been constructed, and why are sermons written? Not that the people may be entertained. They may go for entertainment to other buildings, on other days; when they come to a place of worship on the Lord's day, and after singing God's praises and imploring His pardon and grace, sit down to listen to what the minister may say, it is not, or should not be, entertainment which they expect; and if they expect it, they should be disappointed. Nor is it instruction only, or chiefly, which the pulpit should furnish. I know it is sometimes contended, that it is the special office of the preacher to *instruct* the people. But this seems to me an error, and if practically followed, a very serious error. The end of preaching is not to communicate new views of truth, but to awaken attention to old views; not to feed the mind, but to quicken it; not to educate the intellect, so much as to direct the conscience and soften and elevate the heart. The end of preaching is effect. Some persons are afraid of this word in this connexion. Preaching for effect, they conceive, must proceed from an equivocal motive and tend to a doubtful result. Still I repeat, that preaching should aim at effect, and that the best preaching is effectual preaching. If a

man rises in a pulpit and reads or recites a beautiful piece of composition, which sends away the hearers with their tongues loud in praise of his scholarship or his eloquence, but with their hearts bare of all impression, I do not call that preaching. It may be beautiful, it may be eloquent, it may be very good in its proper place, but it is not preaching. He *preaches*, who makes people feel and act, who leads them to examine themselves and to live as Christian men should live. Whitefield preached, when he drew all Dr. Franklin's money out of his pocket, and when he made a vast congregation tremble and weep; and yet I suppose that if a critic should review a volume of Whitefield's sermons, he would pronounce it a poor book. I do not mean to say, that tears or raptures are evidence of good preaching, or that the pulpit should aim at producing excitement; but I maintain that moral impression and spiritual life are the results at which it should look, and with which alone it should be satisfied. And now I ask, how can there be such preaching, except it come from the soul? How can a minister *affect* others, and so produce the *effect* he should desire, if he be not in earnest, and most heartily in earnest? What is the secret of his power over an audience? What is the channel through which his soul flows into their souls? Sympathy — sympathy established between them and him by his utterance. But now mark; the state of mind to be awakened in them is a religious state — a state of strong interest in religion. If their minds be in such a state, there can be sympathy between them

and him only when his mind is in a similar state, that is, a state of strong religious interest, a state of spiritual activity and fervor. I hold it therefore to be absolutely indispensable to good preaching, that the minister write and deliver his sermon from a soul burning with religious conviction, that he write and deliver it almost as if he could not help writing and delivering it, as if he realized the force of the Apostle's declaration — "a necessity is laid upon me; yea, woe is unto me, if I preach not the gospel." Call this love of souls — zeal — fanaticism — by whatever good or bad name you please; it matters not how it is called, or how described, if it only be found in the preacher. But among us the minister is not required to preach once or twice a year, when a special interest warms his bosom, but Sunday after Sunday, year after year, till he stops because he can preach no longer. Here is our young friend, going to stand up in this pulpit on the next Lord's day to preach the everlasting gospel to this people, and from that day to his death there may never a week pass, in which he will not be called to the same service, except as regard to his physical frame shall provide for him occasional rest. How can he come every week into this place with a sermon — not a written something, but a *sermon*, and preach — not speak to inattentive hearers, but *preach* to his fellow-men, on whose spirits the cloud and the burthen of sin have fallen as he has felt them fall on his own spirit, and who like himself are heirs of immortality — how shall he preach to them every Sunday, unless his

whole soul be in his ministry? It cannot be, it cannot be. He may gain admiration, he may be loaded with praise, he may be idolized,—and show only that he has great talents or fine personal gifts; but he cannot come to this people, in his weekly ministrations, "in the fulness of the blessing of the gospel of Christ," unless he has caught that spirit of devotedness which carried Christ to crucifixion, that he might "draw all men unto himself," and which prompted Paul to "become all things to all men, that he might by all means save some."

I cannot refrain from saying a word on the example which a minister is expected to set before his people and the community. Its efficacy depends altogether upon the confidence which is reposed in his character. It must be believed that the truths which he urges upon others are the familiar subjects of his meditation and the guides of his secret life, that he is a good man to the heart's core, and that he has chosen the ministry because he preferred its sacred offices to worldly gain and worldly honor, and remains in it because it is his delight. Let a minister be suspected of retaining his profession because it gives him a livelihood, or enables him to hold a respectable position in society; or still worse, let it be whispered that the piety, the benevolence, the heavenly-mindedness which he enjoins on others he is not careful to cultivate in himself; and the confidence is, as it should be, withdrawn from him. If circumstances prevent his removal from the place he unworthily holds, the place and its emolu-

ments are all which he has; the respect of his people is not given him; his influence in the city or town in which he lives is not so great as that of the humblest and poorest man whose integrity of character is undoubted. I suppose most of the Jews of our Lord's time looked up to the Pharisees with a sincere respect, for they were too ignorant to perceive the flimsy texture of Pharisaic pretension. But I do not believe that modern Pharisees can walk our streets and be respected. Religious teachers in our days must be religious men; and Christian ministers must be faithful ministers, or the people will neither observe nor hearken to what they say.

We might derive an argument in support of these views of the spirit which should govern the ministry from the character of those who are the subjects of its influence. I have alluded to this consideration, but it will bear a little fuller notice. The subjects of the ministry, they for whose benefit it was instituted and for whose good it should labor, are not made of wood or stone — statues or machines — to be managed by a skilful hand or wrought into shapes of goodness by sheer force. They are men and women, creatures of sensibility, impressible and imitative beings, who must be swayed by motives, and to whom motives must be presented through earnest discourse and virtuous example. They are not beings of intellectual mould only, who must be addressed through the reason alone, and be convinced before they can be moved. Neither may it be presumed, that although in former times it

was necessary to solicit the aid of the sensibilities and sympathies of our nature in bringing men into the kingdom of Heaven, the world now, at least the Christian world, has outgrown this method of spiritual education. I doubt the truth of the remark, that in a highly cultivated state of society the intellect is the only avenue through which the influences of religion should be communicated to the soul. On the contrary, I apprehend that with the growth of mind sentiment will be found, at the very least, to deserve equal attention with intellect, and our Lord's words will appear to convey the true philosophy of religious instruction, as well as to indicate the character of the religious life — "except ye become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of Heaven." But it is only repeating what has been already said, to affirm that one who would awaken the sensibilities or sympathies of others must himself be sensible to every influence of the religion which he would recommend to them — a man of religious sentiment, of a devotional frame and a heavenly temper — a man, in one word, of deep religious experience. Such a man will make it his object to draw others into a participation of that life of which he is conscious, the "life which is hidden with Christ in God." Not more surely will a mother sacrifice herself for her children, than will a minister who understands the nature of his relation to the immortal souls under his care devote himself to their "growth in grace." With the Apostle he will say, if not in words, in every fact of his life and tone of his

voice — "being affectionately desirous of you, we were willing to have imparted unto you, not the gospel of God only, but also our own souls, because ye were dear unto us."

Still farther, these beings on whom the minister must exert a power that shall leave them free, while it guides them to "virtue and glory," are immersed in circumstances mainly unfavorable to his purpose. They live in the world, and he endeavors, not indeed to remove them from the world, but to deliver them from the pollution that loads its atmosphere. They are solicited continually by temptations, that, if successful, will withdraw them from the path to which he has pointed their steps. They are constantly exposed to the enticement of opinions and habits hostile to the character which he would assist them in forming. He preaches on one day in the week. Error stands at the corners of the streets and preaches practical discourses with many graces of form and manner every hour of every day. How can he counteract all this antagonism of falsehood and sin, unless he be devoted to his work, watchful of opportunity, incessant in labor, "instant in season, out of season," and "not counting even his life dear unto himself, so that he may finish his course with joy and the ministry which he has received of the Lord Jesus, to testify the gospel of the grace of God?"

Our attention thus far has been confined to the usefulness of the ministry. Let me now speak of its comfort, and show that on selfish grounds, if on none

higher, the minister should be distinguished by devotedness to his work. His is not a life free from trial. Rather is it a life of peculiar trial. If any one enter it in the hope of finding a couch of ease and a path of roses, he will be bitterly disappointed. I have read of clerical sinecures and of "luxurious parsons," but I thank God this is not the country for such men or such things. Here, if no one else works, the minister must; and work, often, till both body and mind cry out for repose. *This* however can hardly be called a trial. It is not the work, but the feeling that he works to little purpose, which tries his spirit. Week after week — and happy will he be, if it should not be year after year — he must labor in the pulpit and out of the pulpit, by day and by night, in his study and among his people, and see little fruit of his labor. I conceive that there is no other employment in which men engage, that yields so little visible result as the ministry of our established churches. In the early days of a congregation, or at certain periods in its subsequent history, the minister may have undeniable, or even abundant evidence, that his exertions are blessed in the improvement of his people. But in the general course of his services he will have more occasion to adopt the Prophet's exclamation — "who hath believed our report, and to whom is the arm of the Lord revealed?" Discouragement will track his steps and weigh down his heart. His efforts will seem to be without reward, his prayers without answer. If some seed fall on good ground, much the greater part will

be devoured by the fowls of the air, be choked by thorns, or be scattered on a stony soil where it will not take root. Complaint too will arise where he had hoped to find support. He may be misunderstood and misrepresented, the sympathy that was expressed at the commencement of his course grow cold, new voices and new ways be preferred to his familiar voice and trite methods of discourse or action, and he whose usefulness was prophesied in terms which no probable result could have satisfied, be condemned for loss of interest or want of force. Besides exposure to the caprice of opinion and the difficulties that grow out of the inaptitude of people to receive religious impression, from which it is possible that the minister may be saved, there is one cause of distress which he cannot but feel, and must feel the more keenly, the nearer his appreciation of the responsibilities of his office approaches the truth. He feels how inadequate are his powers to the task he has undertaken. That task in its length and breadth, its height and depth, stands before him, and fills the whole scene of his earthly existence, like a gigantic mountain occupying the whole field of vision before a traveller, and seeming to mock his purpose of advancing on his journey. The sense of inadequacy — the most painful conviction that can enter the mind — comes upon him, and well will it be with him, if it do not take him captive and lead him to the brink of despair. It is the work of the Lord which he has chosen; who among the sons of men is equal to the performance of this work? The conversion

of the sinful; the instruction of the well-disposed, many of them older, all perhaps better than himself; the maintenance of the Christian cause against error, vice, and irreligion; the prosecution of that enterprise whose corner-stone was laid in the tomb of Jesus; the spread of that religion whose entrance into the world was celebrated by angels in the songs of heaven; these are the things to be done, and who is sufficient for these things? May not, must not the Christian minister tremble, when the conception of all that needs to be done, and all that ought to be done by one who would "follow Christ in the regeneration," comes to his mind as the measure of his own duty? Under the pressure of these various grounds of anxiety, troubled and disheartened, the minister must be sustained by a resolute devotion to his work, or it will be too much for his strength. Unless he

> "Hath given
> Himself, his powers, his hopes, his *life*,
> To the great cause of truth and Heaven,"

he will faint and grow weary. He must have married his heart to it with the solemn words — "what God hath joined together let not man put asunder;" and then loving it as the chosen of his heart, he will not suffer anything to disturb his satisfaction in the choice which he has made. This *love* of the ministry, this adherence to it for its own sake, will enable a man to bear and to do what without such a principle of attachment would drive him from it, or make him go through its wearisome offices like a prisoner through his ap-

pointed tasks. We have all seen what love will do, — how it will nerve the delicate frame of woman as with iron firmness, and give strength before which obstacles that appear insuperable vanish like mists before a mighty wind. It has converted the sick chamber into a paradise, and filled the dungeon with joy. It has made toils that wore out the body seem light as dreams, and led men to brave dangers as they would take a pleasant walk. So will it pour fortitude and energy into the heart of the Christian minister amidst all his trials. Let him only love his profession, and neither the experience of disappointment nor the contemplation of duty will check "the current of his strong resolve." It was this which enabled Paul to say, "I will very gladly spend and be spent for you; though the more abundantly I love you the less I be loved." And it is this which, in the bosom of the humblest follower of the Apostle now, will support him under all difficulties, nay, will carry him triumphantly over them all.

For, so laboring, in faithful love, he will be successful. Here then I am brought to my last argument in favor of the devotedness which is my theme, — that it will secure the ends of the ministry. The truth of this remark is established by analogy and by observation. In every other walk of life hearty perseverance is almost sure to accomplish its purpose. What men are bent upon effecting they seldom fail to effect, if not to the full extent of their wishes, yet so far as to reward them for their fidelity of purpose. The history of the

world relates on every page some conquest gained by a determined will, some achievement of a devoted heart. As the fire gives the hardness of steel to iron, so does an intense purpose give force to the human faculties. What has not this devotion of mind to a single aim done in the largest, and in the smallest, spheres of action? "I am a beggar," said one who had squandered an ample inheritance, as he looked over the fields which had passed out of his possession, "but I will recover this property;" and the result verified his assertion. It was inflexible purpose, appropriating to itself the heart's desires, which made the boy of Corsica ruler of half Europe. And in every great work of moral reformation, it has been they who have thrown themselves into it, that have carried it forward to its completion. So it was with him who stood at the head of the movement out of which arose Protestantism in the sixteenth century. So it is with the history of the Temperance movement in our own age. Thus do private and public life, thus do good and bad enterprises, show the power which lies in self-consecration.

But what the history of all other provinces of human effort might lead us to expect to find, we do find, when we examine the annals of the ministry. Who have been successful in this department of labor? Devoted men. Who have been powerful preachers? Devoted men. Who have been useful pastors? Devoted men. Who have infused their own spirit into the generation about them, and imprinted their own image upon the

generation after them? Devoted men. In all ages and in all lands a devoted ministry has been a successful ministry. From that wedlock of which I have spoken, between the heart and the aim of the life, have been born efficiency and success. Witness the labors of the Catholic missionaries, who planted the cross on the soil of India, in the heart of China, in the forests of America, and gathered thousands around the sacred emblem. Witness the sacrifices made, in that same Romish Church, by almost every order of monastic life at its beginning, and the rapid increase of its adherents. Witness the zeal of Peter the Hermit, rousing the courage of Christian Europe, and leading thousands to perish for the deliverance of the Holy Land. Witness the energy of the early Reformers alike in Great Britain and on the continent, converting multitudes to the new faith. Witness the bold and earnest spirit of Wesley, from a valley of dry bones raising a denomination full of life. These are conspicuous examples, for they acted in the view of the world. But numberless others of similar import have been presented to the Eye which sees the little as well as the great, in the labors of men whose names may have never passed beyond the bounds within which they have toiled diligently, and therefore successfully. He who by assiduous culture brings one vine in the vineyard of the Lord to bear fruit, illustrates the value of such culture, as well as he who from a more fertile spot gathers more or heavier clusters. From every walk of ministerial service arise the witnesses to the

efficacy of laborious zeal. Hail! ye champions of duty, ye teachers of a holy truth! We welcome you with the message you bear to our hearts, — never to despond, and never to be idle. From you we learn the conditions of success, and the rewards of fidelity; for on your lives was stamped the character of devotedness, and the scenes of your industry bore evidence of usefulness.

Plain as is the instruction these examples convey, the question may be asked, whether we mean to teach that all ministers should exhibit similar absorption in their professional duties. I will not presume to speak in condemnation of those, (if any there be,) who do not; but I certainly mean to indicate this as the standard of ministerial fidelity. I know not at what lower point to place it. Our doctrine simply is, that a minister who would do his duty must devote all his faculties and resources to his ministry. 'What!' you may say, 'his whole time and strength?' Yes, I answer; with that due qualification of such language which common sense will supply. I do not mean, that he must go without sleep, or that he may neglect his family, or that he need relinquish all intercourse with society except that which springs out of his pastoral relation, or that he may not inform himself of the literature of his times; but that his office must ever be uppermost in his thoughts and deepest in his heart, — that he must not entangle himself with cares that shall hinder him in the discharge of its functions, nor covet pleasures, social or mental, that would divert his interest from the

great purpose of his life. I confess, I do not understand how one who "takes heed to his ministry to fulfil it" can attend to any thing else, except as an incidental and subsidiary part of his life. How one can satisfy his conscience in uniting political service with the pastoral office, or in dividing his time between the duties of the pulpit and the studies of classical antiquity, as if the latter were, to say the least, as dear to his heart as the former, is a problem that I am unable to solve. Such combinations remind me of the image described by Daniel, which had "feet part of iron, and part of clay" — good therefore neither for speed nor for strength. It has often been said, with an appearance of pride and delight, that the scholars of both Old and New England have been found among her clergy; but this seems to me equivocal praise. The clergyman has too much to do in his peculiar vocation, to permit him to be earning the laurels of scholarship. If he crave literary distinction, I fear that he undervalues ministerial service.

'But may not the minister seek relaxation, nor cultivate the pleasures of taste and fancy? May he not enjoy the refreshment of society, nor bestow any attention upon the occurrences of the world about him?' Certainly, I repeat, I would advance no such extravagant doctrine. Let him keep up an acquaintance with mankind, with books, with life in its changing aspects. But let him make every thing auxiliary to the one great purpose of his own life. Let him find texts in men, and sermons in the world. When he is not

preaching, let him gather up materials which he may use in the pulpit; when he is not conversing on the soul's wants and destinies, let him be increasing his ability to discourse on these themes. Often must he say to the fascinations of leisure and pleasure, "I am doing a great work, so that I cannot come down; why should the work cease, whilst I leave it and come down to you?" And when he seems to be most free from his professional occupations, he must be preparing himself for renewed diligence. The ministry must be to him the storehouse into which he brings all the thoughts, facts, experience, that he collects abroad, and to the supply of which he makes home, friends, books, society, nature, providence, — all he sees — all he hears — all he does — tributary.

In the city, therefore, not less than in the country, may we find the devoted minister. I presume that this expression brings to the minds of many persons only the image of some faithful pastor in a retired village, who

> "Remote from towns has run his godly race,
> Nor e'er has changed, nor wished to change his place."

'A devoted minister,' they repeat, 'yes — such a man as Oberlin, in his mountain recesses, surrounded by poverty and ignorance. An admirable example of self-devotion. But you do not expect such men to live in cities?' Not live in cities! Why not? Where else are they so much needed? Not live in a wealthy and refined community! Why not? Do not rich men need the gospel as well as poor men, and social refine-

ment need the sanctification of religion as much as a coarser state of manners? 'But such men will not find congenial influences in the city.' Then the more important is it that they dwell there, to create such influences. Let them plant themselves in the bosom of such a community, and prove their devotedness, not by words, but by deeds; and their "labor shall not be in vain in the Lord." Take two examples from the two extremes of the Christian Church. What was it that gave Carlo Borromeo his power over the people of Milan, and enshrined his name in the hearts of many generations? His devotedness; not his eloquence, nor his wealth, nor his station, but his devotedness. What gave Parker — another sainted name — his influence in Portsmouth in the days of its largest prosperity? His devotedness. Not eloquence, for he was not eloquent — in speech; not wealth, for he had it not and desired it not; not station, for he was only a parish minister; but devotedness — devotedness which drew cultivated minds and world-tasked hearts into sympathy with him, and made him "chief among his brethren." A city not the place for a devoted ministry! Away with a notion so false and injurious. Here, in this city of Boston, let us have such a ministry — I mean not to say that we have it not now — but let us always have it. It has been here in former days; but it was never more needed than now.

For, finally, to bring this long train of remark to the point which from the first I have wished to keep in sight, the times call for such a ministry. Its propriety,

in view of the purpose for which the ministry was instituted, and of the various instrumentality it must use; its importance, in respect alike to them who are its subjects, and to him by whom it is sustained; and its certainty of success, as established by analogy, and history, and illustrated by familiar examples, I have endeavored to set before you. But I said it was demanded by the wants of the times, and I need scarce detain you a moment longer to make this plain. The character of the times—it speaks for itself. These are days in which sloth and self-indulgence find no respect and acquire no influence. It is an age of excitement, we are told, and told truly; of feverish and hurtful excitement. But because society is verging to one extreme, shall the clergy lean towards the other, and become as cold as ice, because other people are as hot as fire? What good will they do by such a course? The glaciers of Switzerland are as barren as the lava-covered sides of Vesuvius. Nay, let the latter grow cool, and they afford a soil of peculiar fertility; while on the former you might scatter seeds forever, without a blade of vegetation. Let the clergy be wise as well as faithful; their faithfulness to the circumstances by which they are encompassed will be their wisdom. How can they restrain the temper of the times, unless they understand it; and how can they understand it, unless they in some measure sympathize with it? Excitement they may avoid, but energy, calm, strong, deep-toned energy let them have — the force of the tempest without its violence — the inspiration of the

Sybil without her contortions. These are times in which inquiry ranges through every department of thought; opinions are examined, institutions questioned, and all that is familiar or venerable suspected on the very ground of its association with cherished feelings; when strange doctrines are broached, and strange ways adopted; and that paradox is revived which the English clergy included in the list of erroneous doctrines against which they protested in the early days of the Reformation, to wit, "that all religions and professions, whatsoever they be, are clean contrary to Christ's religion." Such as these are not times for the clergy to be remiss in their duties, or to afford occasion for complaint of their selfish or worldly habits. Their profession is regarded by many around them with distrust; they are themselves made the subjects of inquiry. How shall they meet the trial, but by a consistency of character and a fidelity of conduct which the tongue even of prejudice cannot misrepresent? The days in which we live are distinguished by the zeal of religious denominations, each striving to enlarge its borders and conquer ground which it has lost or is desirous to possess. Shall the people be zealous, while their ministers are insensible to the advantages as well as the perils of their own position? No. They must be seen bearing up the cross, the symbol of self-denial, in the midst of the Church and the world. They must show themselves men of resolute hearts and industrious lives. Above all, they must show themselves to be men of a Christian spirit — "the spirit of

power," as "of love and a sound mind;" the spirit of faith, meek but indomitable faith; the spirit of *devotedness*, which shrinks from no duty, and withholds no sacrifice which the cause of truth and righteousness demands. A devoted ministry — such is the ministry for our times, and for all times. Such is the ministry that will cause our churches to flourish and abound. Such be the ministry whose commencement we this night celebrate!

CHARGE

BY

REV. GEORGE PUTNAM,

OF ROXBURY.

By the most solemn forms known to our churches, by prayer and the laying on of hands, you have been set apart to the work of the ministry. It now belongs to me, as the organ of the churches, and in behalf of this council representing them, to endeavor to impress upon you a just sense of the obligations you are assuming. There are dangers incident to your office, and I would warn you to beware of them. A weighty trust is laid upon you, and I charge you to be faithful.

You are not sent forth, like the first preachers of the gospel, to meet obloquy and persecution, with your life in your hand, devoted like a victim on the altar, consecrated almost to martyrdom by the very vows of ordination. Not this. But other perils lie in your way, less fierce but more insidious, not killing the body, but tending to sap the strength of the soul — the opposite perils of worldly security, and the prosperous condition of the church and the ministry. Beware of the *comforts* of your position. Here, probably, you will find your greatest dangers lie. Beware of sloth. Ease is more fatal to the minister than hardship and toil. With whatever encour-

agements you may set out, as to your acceptableness and usefulness, you will sink, most assuredly, most deservedly, if you come to rely on any endowments or favoring circumstances to sustain you, instead of vigorous labor. Begin with no other thought but to work with your might. Enter upon every year and every week of your ministry with the same rational ardor and purpose of diligence as now at the outset; never let the luxurious allurements of city life, nor the flattery of friends, nor any indications of success, delude you for a moment with the idea that you can afford to be indolent, or have a right to be.

Yet I must warn you against over action. I do not know your temperament. Perhaps you are one of those who, in their passionate zeal for the Master's service, think to crowd the work of a life into a year, and, in disregard of reason and God's natural laws, break down in a race which God has not appointed, and under burdens which he did not lay on them. Shun this error. Do not imagine that the spiritual welfare of the whole world, or even of this city, depends on you. You are only charged with the work of one frail man, in one limited sphere of action. The rest lies with God and with other men and other instrumentalities. Do your own duty in your own province; do it diligently, calmly, and upon principle, and according to your strength, and God will take thought for the world.

Your province, first and specifically, lies here, in this pulpit, and among this people. I do not say you must never do any thing elsewhere and for others; but here *first* and chiefly, and elsewhere incidentally. Spend your best strength here, at home. The field is the world, I know, but each laborer for his own little selected portion of it. If you have superabundant health and strength, you may do much abroad. But fill this place first, and fill it with the flower and fulness

of your strength and life. And let me tell you, that whenever you become more known and eminent for what you do abroad, especially if it be extra-professional, as if you cared more for other people and other objects, from that moment you lose, and most deservedly, the confidence of this people, and you cannot be useful here. Whether it be ambition or philanthropy that leads you away, you will have mistaken your place at least, if not your profession. This is your province. Here put forth the energies of a man — here do the work of an evangelist.

You are appointed to be a preacher of the word — a preacher of righteousness. This I esteem the highest designation of the ministerial office. Devote the best powers God has bestowed on you, and the best, most earnest, and diligent cultivation of them to the pulpit. Not intellect only, and yet that to the utmost stretch of exertion. Let your sermons be written from the very topmost level of your intellectual capacities. Let them not come from the mere dregs and chips of a mind otherwise interested and exhausted; but be the best things, intellectually, that you do or can do. Yet not intellect only — that alone would freeze and starve the church; but intellect warmed by all tender affections and readiest sympathies — spiritualized by faith, sanctified by piety. There must be this combination. The whole inner man must preach, to preach Christ worthily. Strive continually to enlarge and exalt your conception of what a preacher and a sermon should and may be. Woe to you when you think you have attained and become satisfied! You must improve, or you will degenerate. I do not say you must be a religious man for the purpose of being a good preacher. Your individual duty, happiness, and salvation are the only sufficient reasons for that. Be a good man, as a man, a responsible

man, having an individual soul to be saved and blest, and then you will be fit to preach.

Be careful how you preach. Preach sincerely, in the honest convictions of a true man. You had better resign in a week if you cannot. Preach forcibly and earnestly, and yet mildly. Be plain, but not personal. Rebuke faithfully, but not bitterly, not sarcastically. Do not scold or be angry — you can never goad and drive men into the kingdom of heaven. It is true that men will bear a more direct appeal or rebuke from the pulpit, a hundredfold more, than any where else — but they will not bear insult and denunciation any where, and who are you to insist that they shall? They will bear as much as they ought to bear in that direction, from a fellow sinner. Preach gospel truth, and preach it in love; not so as to irritate, but so as to convert men from sin and establish them in good principles, — to win them to Christ.

I do not forget, and I charge you not to forget, that there are more private and social duties pertaining to your office. There is not time to define them. I only say, do not fritter away all your time, and dissipate your mind, by endless visiting, degenerating into perpetual gossip or formal courtesies. And on the other hand, be still more watchful not to omit your pastoral duties through indolence, or mere literary fireside indulgences, — or through extended social engagements and sympathies out of the parish. Let your warmest and most active social sympathies be with your own people, to the *comparative* exclusion of the rest of the world. Your parish first, the rest of the world next. Cultivate the acquaintance and friendship of all your people. Thus you will do them good, and they will do you as much. You will preach better, and they will hear better.

In the exercise of your profession generally, specially the public part of it, I exhort you to look to your motives; not only now at the outset, but all along your career. Low motives corrupt every thing — taint even the best actions. Like bad blood in the veins, they beget weakness and disease, insidiously, through the whole system. Beware of ambition. Do not seek distinction. Let it come of itself, if it will — but come as a consequence, not as an object. Do not preach for popularity or fame; such a motive will secretly vitiate all you say and do. It involves a cheat, such as will not pass either with God or man, and despoils your own soul fearfully of its simplicity and power. Cultivate the love of truth and the love of souls, and be strenuous with yourself in making these motives foremost. Whenever you fall under the dominion of any shape of a worldly spirit, you become, before God, disrobed and excommunicate, a pitiful pretence and mockery of a minister, profaning the holy place you occupy, and blaspheming with the holy words you take upon your lips.

There are many snares to a minister. The sympathy, approbation, and kindness which he enjoys, if he stands well with his people, are a snare to him. Receive these expressions in the kindly spirit in which they are given, and they may well refresh and encourage your spirit. Human nature is not and need not be above them, because they are connected with some of the best affections. But take care that the heart become not greedy of praise, or the ear itching for flattery, lest the soul be robbed of its simplicity, its self-reliance, its heavenly impulses, encouragements, and supports, and the world usurp the place of God.

Keep your own heart, my brother. Keep your own heart. That charge, if you follow it out in all its meaning, and all its applications, includes almost all others. To be a Christian

man, truly, thoroughly, and to the depths of your being, in spirit and life, at the centre of the heart, and down to the inmost hidden roots of motive and intent, — that is the comprehensive fitness, the great preparation for the Christian ministry. Let principle be the guide of your labors, and the gospel your treasure-house of wisdom, and Christ your master, and faith your inspiration, and piety your genius, and a warm heart your eloquence. In a word, I charge you, first and most solemnly, to be faithful to yourself, that so you may be faithful to God and Christ and this people. I have not quoted so much as is usual from the Epistles to Timothy and Titus, because I had rather refer you to them at large. I advise you to read them anew, thoroughly and thoughtfully, verse by verse almost. Just at this time, I think they will open to you with a new aspect, new wisdom, and force.

There is no end to the counsels which offer themselves for utterance, but I must make an end; and I gladly give place to the gentler tones and tokens of sympathy and fellowship, congratulation and encouragement, which now await you from the lips and the hand of another.

RIGHT HAND OF FELLOWSHIP,

BY

REV. C. A. BARTOL.

To me, my brother, is assigned the simplest, but not least pleasant of these services. And there is a fitness in this fraternal part. It is fit that, while the prayer ascends for your consecration, and the charge of the elders is given for your admonition, and the picture of ministerial devotedness is drawn in the very colors of the conscience, an expression of sympathy should soften the solemnity of the scene. I judge too there is a fitness in this to the present state of your own feelings, — which, as I may know by a fresher recollection than that of most of my brethren, are bent already quite enough on the severe considerations of this hour. An indefinite painful sense of responsibility has, I suppose, of its own accord been stealing into your thoughts, till the mental circulations are all swollen, and objects around you look a little dim, — and you but half hear perhaps the excellent things told you, — while your very intense realizing of the occasion, over filling the soul, verges upon the borders of a dream. I would gladly then throw a ray of cheerfulness over "this dim religious light" of your mind. In the name of the Churches here assembled, and without more preface, I cordially proffer you this Right Hand of Fellowship. It is not an emblem

without meaning in nature, as all custom shows. It was the signal of ancient hospitality. It enters into the solemn seal and ceremony of the holy estate of marriage. It is the sign of reconciliation after estrangement of friends. But it has no higher meaning than as the symbol of Christian Fellowship.

And I give this hand, not readily alone for the pleasantness of an occasion, but earnestly from a faith in the idea it represents. I have little sympathy with the extreme individuality, that fears the touch or very thought of friendly association, — and far less with the self-sufficiency, that rates it lightly as a form, and deems it a mere convenience without intrinsic and substantial recommendations. Independence is a good thing, but it needs the savor of sympathy to make it sweet, and the tempering of humility to make it Christian. There is nothing that should cause, as there is nothing that has caused a Fellowship so deep and strong, as religion. All other bonds are as flax to those woven on the unmoving line of eternity. The benediction we invoke, of the Fellowship of the Holy Spirit, is an unmeaning mockery in those not conscious of the "cords of a man" drawing their own hearts together. The Prophets of old, as I read it, were a goodly Fellowship, — the Apostles were a glorious Company, — the Martyrs were a noble Army, — for their unity was in the praises of God, which still can link, as nothing beside, our souls in the soft and strong bonds of the social nature.

But what is implied in this Fellowship, so becoming Humanity, so appropriate to Religion? And, first, it may not be superfluous to say, it is implied, that those who exercise it to each other have, each for himself, established their own minds in the faith and love of their religion and their work. Without this, it is an empty show and false pretence. They, who would have fellowship as Christian ministers, must be Christian ministers. However it may be with those in other callings,

we can be teachers only by being pupils. In the royal or princely council, they must be kings and princes that meet. And if we be not Christ's disciples, we have no right to speak in his name, or profess his religion. But Fellowship does not therefore imply a dead sameness of belief and language on the great themes Christianity proposes. Our Fellowship is not so much speculative as spiritual, as an apostle describes the true communion of the Lord's table to be spiritual, though that has so often been made speculative. Therefore we do not school one another in the particulars of a creed, or the precise forms of sound words. For some to do this to others, is to put themselves between Christ and his followers, as the woman desired her two sons to sit the one on his right hand, the other on his left in his kingdom. Christianity is singularly free from the complicated creed-work, that has entered so largely into the architecture of the Church. It is a religion of Fellowship, because it prescribes no dividing, exclusive terms. The freedom it allows the soul is amazing. It does not give strict definitions of God, or Christ, or the Holy Spirit, its three glorious realities, — because it would leave the disciples to the free action of their own highest contemplations, for loftier views, as the mind itself expands, of God and Christ and the Holy Spirit. My brother, I could not give, and, if I know you, you would not accept a Fellowship, that could subsist only upon this minute inquisition into the operations of the mind on the revelation of God. I can give it at all, not as in the service of any denomination, but as a Christian minister to a Christian minister, in the name of Christian Churches. I would fain give it to many who speculatively differ from me, as sincerely as to those who agree in my views. But because they will not accept it, it is no reason, my brother, why I should not give it to you, — with my best wishes for the success of your ministry and your joy in your work. I give it,

not as some sectarians strangely seem to suppose, as endorsing all you may ever utter, and to be held long after to account for your opinions. Though, if sects will insist on carrying on this barbarous war against whole classes of men for the sins of peculiar or eccentric individuals, I should be quite as willing to have latitudinarian views to answer for, as vulgar fanaticism and base denunciation. We, my brother, have the good fortune not to belong to any sect, — unless they compose a sect, who are cut off by others. Who are answerable for the rent in Christ's seamless robe, but they that rend it! I trust my brother, we shall have grace given us to maintain the catholic stand, however disallowed, of esteeming as Christians all who show the Christian spirit. If the members of a secret brotherhood can know each other by a sign-manual, let a Christian know a Christian through all the disguises of forms and changes of speculation.

But is this Fellowship a hollow seeming, "signifying nothing," because the cordage of creeds is dispensed with? "I trow not." Without binding or impertinently inquiring into one another's belief, can we not hold fellowship in an altogether distinct and intelligible way, if we confide in one another's sincere adoption of Christianity as a religion from God, and acceptance of Christ as its express messenger and sinless example. If a man bow with docility to him at whose feet strong men and pure women of old time sat, — if he take his teachings, precepts, promises, as the holy truth of God under infallible seals, — what matters it to my fellowship with him as a Christian, whether he believe him the second person in the Trinity, a preëxistent angel, or a man? Shall not God have His own option how He shall reveal His will, even though He choose no one should know precisely "who the son is but the Father?" This Fellowship in the spirit is older than all our ecclesiastical organizations. Christ himself

has not ambiguously given its idea. Though loving all men, and eating with publicans and sinners, he yet seems to have had a peculiar affection for his disciples, — those that followed him, trusted him, learned of him, — tenderly calling them "little ones" who believed in him. When shall they live together in that simplicity he desired, in any measure of the same love he would have felt, — may I not say feels, — for the faithful of them all?

But, my brother, I must check these remarks. In giving you again, in behalf of these Churches, the sign of Christian Fellowship, I pray that you may ever feel and have a fellowship, as large and kind and holy, with all who worthily call the name of Christ, as himself would enjoin. But, if you be faithful in your vocation, my prayer, though sincere, is of little moment. There is a necessity in these things. In proportion to your own love, you will be loved. The heart has its cause and effect, as well as all nature. I welcome you to the privilege of unfolding the loving themes of the Gospel, the joy of which a favoring Providence has already so largely bestowed. May it ever be increased. May your people relax not, but draw closer their embrace, not expecting at once the maturity of your powers, — willing you should begin, — as I would, if I may here and now, exhort you to begin, as you can hold out in the race. But I remember there is a Fellowship, I can faintly conceive of, which no words can express, no kindly tokens comprehend. The hidden men of our hearts, my Friend, cherish sympathies beyond the bars of formal exclusion or needful separation. By every thought and act of fidelity, you bind yourself to all good beings, and to the Best of all. And I need not remind you, in closing, that a voice, which would gladly have greeted this day, from the grave "yet speaketh," telling you your most strengthening, purifying communion is with "the spirits of the just made perfect," — with Christ, and with God.

ADDRESS TO THE SOCIETY,

BY

GEORGE RIPLEY.

I AM happy, my christian friends, to meet you on this occasion. I cordially sympathize with you in the joy which animates your hearts. I am glad to unite with you in giving a cheerful welcome to our young friend, whom you have chosen to stand in this place, upon his accession to a pastoral charge in which I can never cease to cherish a deep and lively interest. I deem it a privilege to address you in the few words of friendly congratulation and sympathy, which are suggested by the relations we have so long sustained to one another, as well as by the prospects which this evening appear to open upon your devout and ardent hopes. If I have ever felt a sincere desire for your spiritual prosperity; if I have ever offered the true prayer, that a benign Providence would watch graciously over the welfare of you and yours; if I have experienced delight in strenuous toil for the promotion of pure and enlightened religion among you; if I have done aught to advance your progress in knowledge and freedom, to quicken your attachment to truth and goodness, to inspire you with a holy trust in God, and high and generous hopes concerning man; believe me that the interest which has prompted my too imperfect endeavors in your service is still unabated, and that I rejoice with you, that the work

which was here commenced, with faith and prayer, is to be carried on by fresh and able hands, and that lips gifted with persuasion and glowing with zeal, are here to announce the glorious gospel of the blessed God, as the divinest reality, which can appeal to the heart of man.

Your youthful servant, I cannot doubt, is ready to enter on his great trust, in the spirit of devotion to his duty, and affection for his people. He comes among you in the morning freshness of an unsullied life; he stands, as it were, before the altar of the Most High, to bind himself by a sacramental vow to faithful efforts for your benefit; he would fain find a home by your side, and live and die encircled by your affections, and blessed by your sympathy; he brings the treasures of knowledge discreetly gathered in yonder abodes of studious retirement; and with a spirit, consecrated to your holiest interests, feels that he can have no greater joy than to spend his strength in your service; that his highest earthly reward is to be found in the enjoyment of your affections; and that his loftiest ambition will be gratified by seeing the fruits of his labors in the increasing excellence and beauty of your lives. May he long experience that kindness at your hands, which your recent pastor has so much cause to feel; may warm and true friends ever gather round his side; may he feel bound to you as if by the dearest ties of household affection; may his face long shine upon you as a perpetual benediction; may his voice be like music that never fails to touch and melt your hearts; and may his arduous ministry be cheered and sustained by as many proofs of considerate and intelligent sympathy, as were so constantly enjoyed by him, to whose labors he now succeeds.

But, brethren, bright as are the scenes that arise in prospect before you, true as is the joy that sends a quicker throb to your hearts, it is not meet that you should be addressed

only in words of congratulation to-night. I stand here now to remind you of your duties, as well as to sympathize with your hopes. I feel the solemnity of the occasion too deeply to prophesy to you smooth things, or to seek your favor by flattering words. As one, who has heretofore watched for your souls, and sought to speak to you plainly the whole counsel of God, so far as he understood the testimony, I tell you that a fearful charge is laid upon you, by these new relations; the services of this evening are of startling import, or a hollow mockery; if they mean anything, they mean much, — far more than the worldly and frivolous spectator can suppose; unless you are prepared to carry out and to live out the ideas, on which the office of the christian pastor is founded, your coming together now, is but as the dead to bury their dead.

You profess to be a christian church. Your whole duty then, is comprehended in fidelity to the christian spirit. You have chosen a christian pastor, not to be religious in your stead, not to do away the need of your own endeavors, not to stand as a shield between you and the awful claims of conscience, but to lead you forward in the christian course, to open to you more fully the christian idea, and to aid you by his example, his sympathy, his counsels, his encouragements, his prayers in carrying it into practical effect. But every thing depends not on him, but on yourselves. You are to help him, as surely, — I know not, but as greatly as he helps you. You are to conspire together for the growth of christian holiness in your own hearts, and for the regeneration of the world. You are each to prove yourself a living member of the body of Christ, or your pastor may be a hindrance rather than a help. You may depend so much on him, as to leave your religion in his hands and take no thought for it yourselves. See that you do not fall into this condemnation.

By no means flatter yourselves that you are safe from such a delusion. It belongs to human nature every where; it forms one of the most cunning disguises that the father of lies ever puts on; it is a favorite device with him, wherewith to entrap unwary souls in every age. It is as true at this moment, as it was when Milton described the evil, in words which, once read, can never be forgot: "That there is not any burden, which some would gladlier post off to another, than the charge and care of their religion. There be, who knows not that there be? of Protestants and professors who live and die in as errant an implicit faith as any lay Papist of Loretto. A wealthy man addicted to his pleasures and to his profits, finds religion to be a traffic so entangled, and of so many petty accounts, that, of all mysteries he cannot skill to keep a stock going upon that trade. What should he do? Fain he would have the name to be religious, fain he would bear up with his neighbors in that. What does he do therefore, but resolve to give over toiling, and to find himself out some factor to whose care and credit he may commit the whole managing of his religious affairs; some divine of note and estimation that must be. To him he adheres, resigns the whole warehouse of his religion, with all the locks and keys into his custody; and indeed makes the very person of that man his religion; esteems his associating with him a sufficient evidence and commendatory of his own piety. So that a man may say his religion is now no more within himself, but goes and comes near him, according as that good man frequents the house. He entertains him, gives him gifts, feasts him, lodges him; his religion comes home at night, prays, is liberally supped and sumptuously laid to sleep; rises, is saluted, and after some well-spiced brewage, and better breakfasted than he whose morning appetite would have gladly fed on green figs between Bethany and Jerusalem, his religion

walks abroad at eight, and leaves his kind entertainer in the shop trading all day without his religion."

Brethren, do not think this picture the offspring of the poetic imagination of its author; or that it may be without its counterpart in our own times. The moment you allow yourselves to imagine that your minister can think for you, or live for you, or be religious for you; the moment you expect any trait of character in him, which you do not feel bound to cultivate in yourselves, that moment he becomes an idol, not a friend; a snare to your souls, instead of a helper of your joy.

If you are faithful to the spirit of Christ, you will then feel your personal obligation to act out the christian idea. Let me warn you against the prevailing error of perverting Christianity into a system of speculative doctrines, instead of the rule of life. The gospel of our salvation is not a set of abstract questions; it holds a different sphere from the researches of the critic or the reasonings of the philosopher; it admits of no dispute; it is plain truth addressed to plain minds; and he who tries to scare you into the reception of some dogma of the school where he was taught, as being essential to Christianity, shows an equal want of christian knowledge and of the christian spirit. Our blessed master did not torment his disciples with the discussion of subtle questions; he never shows himself anxious to make them what is called sound theologians; he lays no restriction on the freedom of opinion; but every where asserts that religion is life: a holy life is the true service; naught but this will God accept; and he who is conscious of possessing this, is above the power of earth or hell. Let the sole object of your union as people and pastor be to promote this life; the life of God within the soul; and manifested by an habitual course of pure and beautiful acts. Do not listen to the preaching of your pastor to detect any

symptom of heresy, or of orthodoxy, but to gain refreshment for your religious sympathies. Do not be alarmed, if in the progress of his mind, he should express himself in unusual terms, if he should be led to perceive the truth of unpopular opinions, if he should find not only with the patriarchal Robinson, that Calvin and Luther did not see all things, but that even Socinus, Priestley, and the fathers of a liberal theology among ourselves did not exhaust the infinite domain of truth. Fear not that the cause of Christ can be injured by any speculations, however erroneous, so long as one is faithful to its practical spirit; for the vocation of the church, the purpose of religious union, is, not to arrive at the solution of thorny problems, but to obtain the spirit of holiness; you do not come together to learn metaphysics or any scientific mysteries, but to have the love of God shed abroad in your hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given to you.

And if brethren, your main purpose be to cultivate the christian spirit in your own souls, under the sweet and saving influences of the christian ministry, you will be no less anxious that this spirit, should act with a divine energy, on the great interests of human society. The church of Christ is as a city set on an hill; it reflects far and wide the late and early beams of the Sun of Righteousness; it pours forth from every pinnacle and tower such a flood of celestial radiance, as to expose the slightest speck of evil that falls within its sphere. In its character, it is invasive as the light; like that it is noiseless and gentle; like that, it has power to revolutionize the world, without the aid of whirlwind or storm; like that, it searches and penetrates everywhere; and like that, it causes confusion and pain only to the diseased. If, brethren, you would wisely assert your title to the name of a christian church, you will war with evil in all places; you will, by that very fact, be a band of reformers; you will not be a society

for the suppression of vice, a temperance society, a peace society, an anti-slavery society, a society to send glad tidings to the poor; but by virtue of your existence as a church, you will combine all these objects in one; you will be no less strenuous for the promotion of morals, of peace, of freedom, of justice, than if you were organized and officered, with salaried agents for that purpose, and celebrated a solemn anniversary every year to inform the world what you had done.

And surely, there is need enough that the church should arise in the majesty of truth, terrible as bannered hosts in array of battle, and cause the foul and hideous corruptions of the age, to quail before its divine and awful presence. Unless it do this, as for centuries it has not done, what right has it to assume the sacred name of Christ? Unless the preserving spirit of Jesus lives and thrills in the hearts of its members, how dare it boast of its affinity with the martyred reformer of Nazareth? If in the very bosom of the so called Christian Church, you see pride and worldliness, unblushing avarice and avowed selfishness, fiery bigotry and black superstition, must we not shudder at the departure of the ancient glory, and tremble lest in our own times, the saying should be verified —

> When God would punish nations for their sins
> 'Tis in the Church, the leprosy begins.

"If the salt have lost its savor, wherewith shall it be salted; it is thenceforth good for nothing but to be cast out and trodden under foot of men."

I charge you, brethren, by all your hopes of salvation, by the professions that you have made before angels and men, by your allegiance to the Lord Jesus Christ, by that precious blood which was shed drop by drop for the sins of the world, that you keep yourselves unspotted with the abominations of

these days of Antichrist and sin. It is time for you to act. It is time, with all who bear that name, which seems a talisman against every shape of selfishness and depravity, for great searchings of heart, for repentance, for bitter tears, for agonizing prayers, for sincere reform. The axe is lying at the root of the trees; every tree that bringeth not forth good fruit must be hewn down and cast into the fire. When ignorance and folly ascend the seat of instruction; when blazing fanaticism is a passport to honor; when bigotry dares utter her thunderbolts of denunciation against the meekest and holiest of souls; when the pursuits of business are stained by foul frauds; when our halls of legislation resound with the cries of misrule, and the streets of our cities are subject to the frantic violence of an insane multitude; when broad phylacteries, and the tithe of mint, anise, and cumin, are made a substitute for justice, mercy, and faith; it is time for the whole church of Christ, to arise from the dust, and put on her garments of strength and beauty, and with a voice, like that of many waters, to plead the cause of righteousness in the presence of an ungodly world. This, brethren, is your mission, as members of a christian church. Necessity is laid upon you, unless you would belie your profession and your name. Your pastor is to preach the gospel in this pulpit; you are to preach the gospel wherever you go. You are to preach it in your lives and example; by the fireside and by the wayside; in your dwelling-houses and in your store-houses; when you perform a contract or when you offer a prayer; when you unite in communion with your brethren, and when you engage in transactions with the world. And do not think that this is an easy work. You cannot do it without renouncing and trampling under your feet, the favorite objects of the world. You cannot do it without being reproached for your singularity. Until every knee shall bow before the majesty of the

cross, he that will live godly in Christ Jesus must suffer persecution. In some form or other, it will surely come. Be prepared for it, and do not fear it. It is a grisly phantom, but has no power. The hairs of your head are all numbered and not one of them shall fall to the ground without your Father's will.

Brethren, I rejoice with you in the connexion which has been sanctioned by the solemnities of this evening. Still more shall I rejoice, if it shall prove the occasion of increasing your fidelity to the divine ideas for which Christ died. In my prayers to Almighty God in your behalf, I do not ask that these walls may enclose a throng of curious spectators led hither by the attraction of the latest novelty; I trust in his mercy that this may never become a favorite resort of worldly ambition; I should weep to see this solid structure, made an anchor, to restrain the progress of the mind and of social reform; but I do earnestly beseech of the Divine Providence, that this altar may be crowded with meek and reverent worshippers, who are brought by religious sympathy to this Sabbath home; that your pastor, though young in years, may be old in wisdom; and that he may never take counsel of flesh and blood, but of the divine oracle within the soul. I pray that you may be a true church of Christ; nor can piety or affection dictate a more comprehensive prayer than this.

Brethren, the ties that are formed to-night need not loosen those that have been formed before. The church of Christ is one, and admits no division.

> "The saints on earth, and all the dead
> But one communion make,
> All join in Christ their living head
> And of his grace partake."

We cannot but call to mind, at this solemn moment, those who were once our fellow worshippers in this place, and with

whom we took sweet counsel as we walked to the house of God in company. Do I deceive myself in the belief that we have had those in the midst of us, such as christian church, or human society is rarely blessed with? I remember now with you those pure and gracious spirits, whose presence was the strong cement of this congregation and to whom pastor and people were equally indebted for sympathy, friendship, and the treasures of a good example. One after another they dropped away from us, "like leaves in wintry weather;" and left a chasm in our assemblings here, that could never be filled up.

The fathers sleep in peace; they have been admitted to the abodes above, where in "solemn troops and sweet societies," the harps of heaven are tuned to angel voices; but instead of the fathers are the children; and brothers and sisters are now here to take the place of those whose early loss we have not yet ceased to weep. May God grant, that those who remain may be as happy and as virtuous as those who have departed. May your life be as noble and true as was theirs; may the last messenger come to you with as little terror as he did to them; and may the services of this hour and the endeavors of your new beloved pastor prepare you to meet them in peace, after the storms of life are over,

"On that silent shore,
Where billows break and tempests roll no more."